

ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS

Policies and Procedures

Title: Outside Awards and Recognitions

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Labor and Employee Relations Branch

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This DIRECTIVE prescribes policy and procedures with respect to nominations for and acceptance of outside awards and recognitions.

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1. ABBREVIATIONS

- LERB - Labor and Employee Relations Branch
- PD - Personnel Division

2. DEFINITION

Outside Awards and Recognitions are those awards, recognitions, and certain honoraria granted by non-Federal entities, such as professional, technical or trade groups, associations, or private foundations.

3. POLICY

It is the policy of ARS to foster interest in outside awards and recognitions and to recognize those employees who have been so rewarded. Supervisors and managers are encouraged to nominate employees for this type recognition. All nominations submitted in one's official capacity must be processed through appropriate channels. Employees who are recipients of such awards or who are nominated shall avoid the appearance of conflict of interest in the conduct of his/her official duties. Generally, employees may accept awards and recognitions which (a) are unconditional and (b) are based on past performance.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

LERB will:

- Distribute requests for nominations for outside awards and recognitions as they are received. Exhibit 4, Directive 468.7 contains a listing of major external awards.
- Provide advice and assistance in the preparation of nominations for outside awards and recognitions.
- Advise as to the propriety of an employee's acceptance of any outside award or recognition which does not clearly meet the criteria in Section 3 above.

Area Directors will encourage managers and supervisors to keep abreast of outside awards and recognitions and to nominate employees who are eligible.

Employees will:

- Inform their supervisors when they have been nominated for an outside award or recognition or named as a recipient by a non-Federal entity.
- If nominated for an outside award or recognition or if granted an outside award or recognition:
 - Refrain from making any decision or influencing any decision which may result in a grant, contract, cooperative agreement, or other business relationship with the nominating or awarding entity; and
 - Refrain from participating in the administration of any relationship in
 - above and defer responsibility for same to someone not under his/her supervision.
 - Refuse to accept an outside award or recognition from a non-Federal entity with whom he/her has been previously involved in a manner described in preceeding bullated paragraphs above.

Supervisors will:

- To the extent possible, assure that employees comply with the provisions of subparagraph **Employees** above.
- When informed by an employee or by a non-Federal organization and not through official channels, that an employee has been named as a nominee by a non-Federal entity, or that he/she has been named as a recipient of an outside award or recognition, notify LERB.

NOTE: Some awards and recognitions which originate outside of the United States may constitute a foreign gift subject to the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act of 1966, as amended (DIRECTIVE 468.4). If so, it may be improper for an employee to accept the award unless he/she is doing so on behalf of the United States. Therefore, officials who are responsible for obtaining information and for reviewing information to determine if acceptance of a gift is proper will assure that information and questions pertaining to foreign government involvement in an award are adequately considered.

5. PROCEDURES

Employees will, when relating information as required in Section 4, **Employees** above, provide as much information as is available concerning:

- The composition or nature of the nominating and/or awarding entities.
- The monetary value of the award.
- Whether or not the nominating or awarding organization has or has had any relationship with ARS or has a potential interest in any relationship with USDA as described in Section 4, **Employees**, above, if known.

Supervisors will:

- Relate information described in Section 5, first paragraph, above to LERB through the appropriate Area Director.
- Prepare nominations for outside awards in accordance with criteria for that award.
- Submit nominations through appropriate channels to LERB sufficiently in advance to meet deadlines.

LERB will:

- Solicit nominations for outside awards.
- When advised that an employee has been nominated or named as the recipient of an outside award or recognition, advise the appropriate Area Director:
 - If acceptance of the award by an employee is proper.
 - Of any conditions for acceptance of the award.

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